

if in the morning he puts on patent-leather shoes that hurt him, this is because the pair in which he would be comfortable is not fit to be seen,

5 January

Sometimes the *reality* of an act is perceptible to us only in its consequences, Great crimes have occasionally been committed so easily only because in a sort of dream. Later on, the criminal would have liked to wake up. He would have liked not to have been taken seriously. . . .

7 January

Jacques Blanche, at whose house Henri Ghon and I are lunching, describes his restlessness to us. He thinks it has reached its pitch; yet it might get worse. The painting he is doing today makes him look with disgust on what he did yesterday; his beggars of Pont-l'Évêque make all the "society people" insipid to him. In England, he claims, this would not be so. And he talks of selling out everything, of dropping Paris and going to live in London, or Pont-à-Évêque at least. But Saint-Martin will not be for rent this year; and he has had no luck in finding another lodging. And we agree with him that his pictures from this summer, perhaps the best that he has done, are only the beginning of something different. . . . Henri Ghon especially waxes enthusiastic at the idea of a cynical Blanche. He claims that we are largely responsible for this and traces Blanche's cynicism to the period of the Exposition, to our association with him, and to the big canvas in which we are portrayed.² I should like to believe it.

In the end Griffin did not sell those *Mercure* stocks^a that he said he wanted to sell; a reference in his conversation (this evening at the Van Rysselberghe's) has informed me. And before I can laugh with him at this change of heart, he manages, as he tells the story,

to transform into
a premeditated decision what circumstances forced
him to do.

It is only because Viel[^]-Griffin never tells or shows
more than the
outcome of his indecision that he is able to seem a man
of will; but cer-
tain little facts betray him.

Talking of his visit this morning to the young sculptor
Charmoy, he
protests against the work and the man, is unwilling to
see in it anything
but puffery, *arrivisme*, and pretension; you would
think, to hear him
tallc, that he alone had counterbalanced the others'
excessive flattery,
But I am free to think that he talked this way out of
reaction against

² This group portrait of Gide, Gh6on, Athman, Eugene
Rcmart, and
Chanvin is now in the Rouen museum.

⁸ The young writers who could afford to do so bought
stock in the *Mer-*
cure de France when it was incorporated in 1894.